/102 cont./

765 After the funeral, on the day of Mao /of the traditional
756 calendar/, the bereaved family invites a sorcerer to the house
[782] to offer sacrifices to the deceased. A table is set, on which are laid bowls of meat and cups of wine. The sorcerer burns yellow wax, beats bamboo tubes, and utters spells. When the
[787] sorcerer's hands suddenly begin to shake without stopping, the members of the family think that the deceased has come back, and they all burst out in loud weeping. In the fifth night watch
765 they offer mi-pa to the honorable deceased, which somewhat
[782] resembles the Chinese custom of hui sha /"warding off noxious
[177] influences"/. After this the maternal uncle about to depart,
[604] ask the host family for personalthings left, such as the deceased's clothes, shoes, socks, and bed sheets. If the dead person was
[768] a woman, he asks for the marriage portion and the amount received depends upon the financial condition of the host family.

766 From very early times the Miao have had tribes but not
751 tribal chiefs, and therefore they do not have different classes
[565] nor differentiated marriage or funeral ceremonial customs. The funeral for a Miao sorcerer, however, is slightly different from that for the ordinary person. When a sorcerer is at the point of death, /103/ two other sorcerer priests are summoned to the house. When he breathes his last, the members of the family must not weep. One sorcerer priest climbs on the house and removes a few tiles from it to make an opening, which is called "opening the heaven's gate." The other sorcerer priest sits below behind the deceased, and as soon as he sees "heaven's gate" has been opened, he immediately lets out a loud cry, to which the one on the roof responds with another cry, and thus, the two men, one above and the other below, start their ritual. It is said that the one above opens heaven's gate, and the one below shuts the grove /literally, "earth storehouse"/. This is to cause the departed sorcerer not to enter hell but to ascend to heaven. After this the family members may begin to cry and weep.

/103 cont./

766 On the day of the funeral procession, some seven, eight,
756 or ten, and sometimes as many as 20 or 30, sorcerer priests are invited. Each holds his particular sorcerer's banner and cymbals and drums, with a large entourage following. Therefore, the funeral procession of a sorcerer in the Miao area is an exciting affair well worth watching. It is said that when the
[775] deceased sorcerer priest ascends to heaven, on the way he has to pass through five garrisons and four outposts. Along the way the other sorcerer priests are expected to act as the vanguard, hence the more sorcerer priests present the stronger the force. Each sorcerer priest has to go to the grave before he can withdraw his "soldiers" and lower his banner to return home.

765 As for Miao mourning garments, when a father dies, a
[292] white headband is worn, with two streamers trailing behind before the burial has yet taken place. If both parents are dead, then the two streamers reach to the ground, otherwise only one ribbon does. Within a period of four months the mourner should not lift a hoe or a machete for at least one month; he
[302] does not shave his head, he does not sing, he wears mourning clothes for three years. In the case of a mother's death, the white cloth headband with which the head is wrapped is not washed for four months, during which period the mourner does
[302] not shave his head nor drink cold water, and the mourning clothes are worn for four years. There are persons who wear mourning for their deceased parents all their lives up to 50 or 60 years. Mourning clothes for paternal grandparents are worn for 12 days, and for a maternal uncle or his wife 12 days also. For a deceased son the mother wears a red streamer on her headband for three days.

593 From this time on the life of a Miao bride varied little from that of other Cowrie Shell Miao women. It was not much easier, though a little more full of good things, perhaps, if her husband's family was large and well-to-do and she fitted into it well.

766 Death and Burial. When a very small child died, a little coffin was made by the men of the family, but there was no ceremony at the house, other than the singing of the lament by the mother and girls and women of closely related households. During the night when the second grandson of the old man died I heard the mother going all through the village singing the lament, beautifully and sadly as if in real grief. The child was buried next day but I do not know where nor with what ritual. They made it plain that they considered it a strictly family affair and I respected their wishes. The family was genuinely distressed and reasonably so, for he was an exceptionally intelligent child and the only remaining grandson. Moreover, not long before the father had been taken away by soldiers. The mother seemed beside herself for several days, calling another child by her child's name. The old man wept, then apologized for his "weakness." They did not tell the father, for they feared he would make an effort to get back and so get into more trouble.

757 When the baby took ill the mother said it had a fever. I gave it a small dose of quinine and aspirin. She said she did not know of any other symptoms. But the next day they called in the shamaness and, as he lay on a pallet of straw by the fireplace, he showed unmistakable signs of dysentery. Two other children in the family had it at the same time, but recovered. When I learned they had dysentery, I gave the parents bismuth, but it is difficult to administer and they said the children would not take it. That night the baby developed meningitis and died.

764 535 The length of time given to activities and their elaborateness in connection with the death and burial of an adult depended upon the wealth and extent of relationship in the family, as well as the time of year at which the death occurred. I was not in the village

*A rectangle of brown "grass paper" with a de-

[52a]

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

754 An enemy who wishes to injure the descendants of a person who is being buried secretly throws tiny pieces of iron or wood onto the corpse as it lies in the coffin or into the coffin beside the corpse. If these are not removed, the descendants will suffer great injury, so just before the burial a careful search is made and all such things are carefully removed from the coffin.

787 Burials must be on days controlled by snakes or rabbits.

766 Because it is believed that the spirits of children, after death, roll hail in their hands and throw it down, making hailstorms, they tie a red cloth around the hand of a dead child before it is buried so as to prevent the child from doing such things.

787 764 Formerly the Ch'uan Miao did not take note of the *yin yang* 陰陽 and *fêng shui* 風水 when arranging their graves. Now they use these principles, which they have learned from the Chinese. Chinese *fêng shui* geomancers are sometimes called in to determine the place and direction of the grave, for they are considered more efficient than those of the Ch'uan Miao. Formerly the graves were parallel to the mountains but now, like those of the Chinese, they are at right angles.

765 For two or three nights after the burial fire is taken to the grave and on the next three mornings afterward food is taken to the grave for the newly-buried ancestor to eat.

In making the fire, twelve bamboo sticks are stuck into the ground on the road or path and six bunches of grass, called *yin pao* 陰包, are placed between the sticks. The grass is burnt but not the sticks.

On the first morning, three bamboo cups are filled with rice and some meat is wrapped up in a leaf. These are taken to the grave and left there. For the second meal, on the second day, these things are taken half-way to the grave and left on the road uncovered. On the first and second days the dead person is merely invited to eat. On the third day the food is placed on the grave and covered with thorns or twigs of bamboo and the food is left on the grave.

[775] To understand the Ch'uan Miao memorial customs, it must be borne in mind that the Ch'uan Miao family includes not only the living but the souls of the departed ancestors for at least three generations; also that the person in Hades needs the same things that he does in this world. He must have food, clothing, money and other things, and he will find cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens useful. These must be provided by the living descendants and the dead ancestors reciprocate by protecting the living descendants and helping them to prosper. Offerings or sacrifices are simply food, money, clothing, drink, etc. given to the deceased ancestors to eat, drink, wear, and use, with the expectation that the ancestors will help the

[11 cont.]

764 [177] On the third day comes "fa-sang" [burial]. In former times the body was wrapped in a straw mat, but now it is laid in a coffin. This is the result of Chinese influence and practiced by those who live near the Chinese. At the time of burial, a small tree of about ten feet long is split in two, its bark peeled off and the two ends tied with ropes. The corpse is then placed on it and carried away on the shoulders. When the procession leaves the house the filial son walks in front, followed by the women mourners, whose long, show laments and plaintive cries are too sad to hear. Arriving at a mountain spot they dig the earth [12] to make a well, the four walls of which are lined with stone slabs. Into the well the coffin is lowered. If the body is wrapped in a straw mat, its two sides are left empty. On the top of the well more stone slabs are laid and then some earth. The tombs are all laid crosswise, hence the expression, "hêng Miao, tao Ch'i-lao [crosswise Miao and upside down Ch'i-lao]. After burial the guests all return to their respective homes.

766 777 [801] The Miao are superstitiously prejudiced against repeat figures in the age of the deceased, such as 22 or 33, believing that these figures would cause the dead to receive extra punishment in the spirit world and at the same time bring bad luck to the family. To overcome this mishap they jack up the coffin in some deep mountain, without letting it touch the earth on the theory that in so doing the spirit of the dead would not be admitted that year to the spirit world. In similar instances the Ch'ing Miao, whose dead is wrapped up in a straw mat, would hang the corpse high up on some lofty cliff in some wild area without letting it touch the earth to avoid damnation.

5. Culture

796 [771] 1) Religion. There is strictly no religion to speak of among the Miao-I in Kweichow. After living in the mountain village, they have come to respect the forest behind it, which they call [782] "hou lung" [back dragon] and once every spring they offer sacrifice to the mountain forest. After the sacrifice they

[26 cont.]

000 time [about April 5th] would be quite enough.

766 164 757 Hê Miao who die of leprosy are cremated. The dead body is carried to a vacant lot to be placed on a pile of firewood and burned before the public. It is probably for the same purpose of avoiding contagion that the Hê Miao at Yung-chiang who die of small pox are cremated -- a sanitary idea derived from experiences.

5. Religious Beliefs

774 776 The Short-skirt Hê Miao apparently believe in animism. In their view every object in nature is invested with a spirit. The sky, earth, sun and moon are all nature spirits, but even rocks, rivers, bridges, trees and wells are also endowed with spiritual powers. The duties and responsibilities of these spirits, however, are not quite divided, and therefore in case of sickness, engagement and the acquisition of sons they would go to one of these objects to offer prayers, and if their prayers are fulfilled they would have to offer sacrifices. There are two kinds of spirits: the good spirits, efficacious and powerful, who guard over the welfare of the mortals, but in case of offences against them, can also inflict severe punishments; the bad spirits or ghosts, who are bent on doing harm and whom one has to suppress if one cannot put up with them. The first category of spirits includes the Jade Emperor, the Guarding Buddha, one's ancestors, the King of Hades, the Earth God, the God of Wealth, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, Yo Fei [warrior hero of the 12th century], Shen-nung [Divine Husbandman, a mythical emperor of pre-historical times], Kwan-ti [warrior hero of the 3rd century, sometimes called the God of War], tree spirits, cliff spirits, bridge spirits, the Sun God, the Moon Goddess, the winnowing-fan spirits, and the Lady Buddhas. The second category includes the spirits of thunder and lightning, the tiger ghost, the well ghost, the drowning ghost, the mouth odor ghost, the sly ghost who hurts people surreptitiously, the pu-nung (Miao dialect) ghost, the nai-huang (Miao dialect) ghost, the leg-pulling ghost, the breath-obstructing ghost, the soul-bewitching

/116 cont./

764 [775] [789] spirits, a pig and a couple of chickens are slaughtered, and the soul is invited to feast on them. Then a great dance takes place."

The deathwatch is maintained by the parents, the surviving spouse, and the children. After a few hours, two or three of these closest relatives relieve one another. During the deathwatch relatives and condoling friends, whose numbers depend on the importance of the deceased, speak of the dead person and mourn his passing. If the deceased was a distinguished [766] man, his body lies in state for two days; in the case of a humble man and women and children, only one day.

614 764 [322] During the deathwatch the men of the sib prepare the coffin for the deceased. For this purpose a tree trunk of a proper length for the deceased is hollowed out. No ceremonies and no special handling of the tools are connected with the carving of the coffin. They go about this work in the same way as they do when they make a pig trough. Then the corpse is put, on its back, into the coffin, and the latter is closed with two boards. Toward twelve o'clock the same men begin to dig a grave at a place in the jungle selected by them. Since there are no cemeteries, and no special burying grounds for the sib, the choice of the site is left to these men, who perform this work as a pious service and have no other function in connection with the burial. -- There are no professional grave- [767] diggers.

764 The grave is always laid out in an east-west direction, and in stony or level ground it is dug out about one meter deep, otherwise another half a meter.

The burial takes place between about two and three [614] o'clock. The closest male members of the sib who are able-bodied carry the coffin to the burial place, accompanied by all the sib members and guests. Here it is let down into the pit in such a way that the corpse lies horizontally in the grave, with the head toward the east and the feet toward the west. The Meau of today no longer know why this direction is observed; they are following a /117/ custom handed down from

/117 cont./

764 former times. No gifts are added to the coffin. The grave is now closed again with stones and earth; sometimes a mound is formed, sometimes it remains flat. It also happens that a simple fence is erected around the grave site or the grave mound. Often the grave is also covered with leaves which are weighted down with sticks and stones. This is supposed to be [825] the most effective way to prevent wild animals from digging up the corpse. If the location of the grave is to be kept secret, the earth which remains after the grave is closed is scattered, and in a few hours nothing remains to suggest a burial site. [766] In no case, not even in connection with the death of prominent Meau, are forked posts or megaliths erected.

764 After the burial a sacrifice is offered. In the case of a 782 poor man, pigs or merely chickens are slaughtered without much ceremony or ado. If he were a rich man, however, the [556] sacrifice consists of an ox or a buffalo. Even during the [533] slaughtering, the playing of the mouth organs, the gongs, and, [775] if such are available, the drums begins and continues uninterruptedly until the meat of the sacrificial animal is completely cut up and the soul of the deceased has been invited to enjoy itself. This is followed by dancing to the mouth organs, which ends the funeral. During the following three days additional sacrifices are offered to the soul of the deceased by [775] putting food on the grave, since it is assumed that during this period it stays in the vicinity of the grave (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section "Ideas about Death and the Soul").

[766] The manner of burial is basically the same for men, [554] women, and children, with no differences other than that the sacrifices characterize the social rank of the deceased. Moreover, depending on the rank of the deceased, more or fewer 764 mourners appear. Abadie (1) confirms this and describes the 766 177

1. Page 168.

burial of a very distinguished Meau chief, which, he says, was just as simple as that of a humble man, except for the coffin for which, following the Chinese custom, a non-rotting, petrified wood was used.